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ABSTRACT

A three-year experimental program established in 1966 in Spanish language instruction at the secondary level is reported in this study. Students at Commack High School North, New York, participated in a total immersion language program in Spanish, taking two to four classes of instruction in the target language per day. Classes included regular Spanish courses, world history, humanities, and civilization. Major sections discuss the method, results, and implications of the experiment. A comprehensive listing of textbooks and materials used in the program is appended to the study. An extensive number of tables are included and focus on the Total Immersion Language Program 1966-69, program evaluation, various test scores, and alternative course sequences for a total immersion program. (RL)

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Experimental Program

Technical Report

TOTAL IMMERSION LANGUAGE PROGRAM

A New Approach to Foreign Language Instruction

BSCR 002-71

Commack Public Schools

Commack, New York

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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The University of the State of New York
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FOREWORD

It is generally believed that success in speaking a foreign language will vary in proportion to the amount of time spent in learning and using that language. Accordingly, Commack High School North, Commack, New York, in 1966, instituted a Total Immersion Language Program which permitted students to spend a substantial part of each day in speaking, hearing, writing, and reading a foreign language. Besides taking the usual foreign language courses, the Total Immersion students pursued a variety of other subjects in the foreign tongue.

This technical report provides a detailed account of the Total Immersion experiment as carried out at Commack High School North. It includes the rationale and objectives of the program, a summary of the courses and materials used, a description of the first students to go through the program, and an account of the evaluation of the project over the first 3 years.

The Total Immersion Program, supported jointly by the Commack School District and the New York State Education Department Experimental and Innovative Programs, was developed under the direction of Stefano Morel, Chairman of the Foreign Language Department, Commack High School North. Mr. Morel has indicated his wish to acknowledge the cooperation

and support of Paul M. Mitchell, the former superintendent of Commack Public Schools; Victor Kirsch, their Director of Research and Program Development; and the five participating teachers: Frank Fallace, Rhoda Feigenbaum, Paul Ferrotti, Manuel Lopez, and Ana Santos.

As Principal Investigator for the Total Immersion experiment, Mr. Morel prepared the final reports which were edited for this publication by staff members of the Bureau of School and Cultural Research: Howard Berkun, Kathryn Miller, and Ruth Salter.

It is hoped that this technical report will offer stimulation as well as specific suggestions to school administrators and teachers wishing to speed their students to foreign-language fluency.

William D. Firman

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Assistant Commissioner
for Research and Evaluation

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INTRODUCTION

Shortly after the launching of Sputnik in 1957, noble calls to bilingual and bicultural proficiency were sounded. The New York State Education Department in its French Syllabus for Secondary Schools stated:

> The growing concern of Americans with their participation in world affairs, the increased awareness of the values of foreign language study in its cultural and practical aspects, and the technological developments which bring nations together in time, have aroused a general feeling in the public mind that more citizens should be able to communicate in a foreign language as a matter of national as well as personal interest.[1]

The distinguished linguist Nelson Brooks of Yale University wrote:

> There is in our country today a widely held view that the learning of a contemporary language must no longer be only in terms of books, translations, grammar exercises, and world lists--with reference made to English at every point. What should be learned instead is a use of the new language as its native speakers use it, so that we may communicate directly with them as well as study their civilization and their literature.[2]

To achieve these goals, new materials were prepared, language instruction in grade 7 was initiated, new teaching methods (e.g., audio-lingual and the "new Key") were strongly encouraged, and expensive electromechanical aids were utilized.

What are the results today? Do more Americans speak foreign languages? Do American students graduate from high school with a bilingual and bicultural knowledge of a foreign language? The Honorable Senator Jacob Javits of New York recently wrote:

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[1] French Syllabus for Secondary Schools, (Albany, New York: State Education Department, 1960), p. 9.

[2] Nelson Brooks, Language and Language Learning, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1960), p. x.

> The United States is dreadfully under-equipped in the linguistic talents that it shall need for the last quarter of this century. Very few of our countrymen even have a working ability with Western European languages, much less the great languages of the remainder of the world. Thus, we are impeded commercially, culturally, and politically.[3]

Robert F. Roeming, professor of French and Italian at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and managing editor of The Modern Language Journal, speaking at a Language Workshop at C. W. Post College, Brookville, New York, on November 16, 1968, remarked: "Proficient practitioners of a second language in our country are very few."[4]

A recent survey of 91 foreign language teachers and supervisors in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, asked: "According to your experience, do high school students achieve complete foreign language fluency and competency so that we could call them bilingual and bicultural?" Of the 62 teachers who responded, 81 percent answered, "No"; 15 percent said, "A few." Of the 29 supervisors who answered, 93 percent said, "No"; 7 percent said, "A few."

What is the problem? The regular foreign language classroom study of one period a day for 3, 4, or even 5 years has not produced bilingual and bicultural students.

The ideal condition for learning to speak a foreign language fluently and to understand it completely would be to live in a foreign country and be exposed to the foreign language and culture 24 hours a day. Since this is impossible for most people, it was felt that it would be valuable to

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[3]Letter from Senator Jacob Javits to Stefan Morel, January 11, 1969.

[4]Robert F. Roeming, "Trends in Foreign Language Learning," paper presented at the 10th Anniversary Language Workshop of the Foreign Language Association of Coordinators and Supervisors of Long Island, C. W. Post College, Brookville, New York, November 16, 1968.

create in the school a learning situation in which the foreign language would be heard and spoken for more than one period a day over an extended period of time. On the basis of this assumption, a Total Immersion Language Program was established at Commack High School North, Commack, New York, in September 1966. The program, planned for a 3-year period covering grades 10, 11, and 12, was to give the student an intensive experience in the use of the foreign language. Its primary objective was to help the high school student achieve fluency and correct pronunciation in speaking a foreign language, complete understanding of it when spoken by a native, mastery in writing the language without orthographic or grammatical mistakes, and adequate reading comprehension of printed material both classical and popular. A secondary objective was to guide the high school student toward a knowledge and appreciation of the culture of the country whose language he would be learning and of the works of art and ideas of other great civilizations. Because of its popularity in the Commack High School and because of staff interest, Spanish was the language chosen for the Total Immersion experiment.

METHOD

The Total Immersion Students

Participation in the Total Immersion Language Program was voluntary. Likely candidates were identified by the foreign language teachers on the basis of past performance in Spanish I and II and probable success in Spanish III. These students and their parents attended an evening meeting at which the 3-year experimental program was fully explained and discussed. The students then made their decisions regarding enrollment.

Seventeen 10th-graders chose to participate in the Total Immersion Program. All were in the bright-normal to superior range in IQ. Their proficiency in Spanish varied: some were very good, some average, some below average. Data on their ability and achievement are given below in conjunction with information on comparison groups.

One student left the program after the first year; three others withdrew after the second year. With an attrition rate of less than 25 percent, 13 students completed the 3-year experiment.

The Total Immersion Program

In the Total Immersion Program, two to four periods per day were devoted to language instruction and language practice. In addition to the regular Spanish courses, courses in world history, humanities, and civilization were used to expose the students to the foreign language and culture. In these "nonlanguage" classes, which explored such topics as sociology, economics, literature, and government, Spanish became the primary medium of communication. To fully grasp the subject matter of these courses and to indicate his understanding, the student had to have an adequate knowledge of both the vocabulary and grammar of the language. He, therefore, would intensify his efforts to achieve command of the language. At the same time, his concentration on the subject matter would increase.

In the "nonlanguage" classes, the students were called on to think and express themselves in the foreign language. Spanish thus became a functional tool rather than just a subject of study. Spanish was also a functional tool in the lunchtime recreational activities which rounded out the Total Immersion Program.

The lunch-recreation program started as a Spanish conversation class. However, it became apparent in the first year of the program that after three periods of listening and trying to speak the foreign language and with the prospect of three more demanding classes in English, mathematics, and science, the students needed some relaxation. It was decided that English would be spoken during lunch but that the latter part of the period would be spent watching movies, slides, and filmstrips with Spanish sound tracks or listening to Spanish radio programs or Spanish records and tapes. This pattern was followed throughout the program.

The Total Immersion Program for each of the 3 years is shown in table 1. Brief descriptions of each year's offerings follow. Texts and other materials used are listed in appendix A.

TABLE 1

Total Immersion Language Program
1966 - 69

Grade 10		Grade 11		Grade 12	
Course	Credit	Course	Credit	Course	Credit
Spanish Level III	1	Spanish Level IV	1	Advanced Placement Spanish I - Iberic Literature	1
Humanities	1	Humanities	1		
World History	1	Lunch-Recreation	-	Advanced Placement Spanish II - Latin American Literature	1
Lunch-Recreation	-			Ibero-American Civilization	1
				Lunch-Recreation	-
Total Credits	3		2		3

Grade 10--In Spanish Level III, the students pursued the formal study of the language with emphasis on conversation, writing, and native culture. The class was always conducted in Spanish.

In the humanities class, the students became familiar with the Spanish texts of literary masterpieces such as the Iliad, the Odyssey, the Aeneid, and Don Quixote, and ancient legends like the Nibelungen, the Chanson de Roland, and el Cid. Other subjects normally covered in a humanities sequence were also explored. This class was conducted in Spanish, and the students were continually given the opportunity to develop their reading and writing skills.

For a number of reasons, the world history class was not always conducted in Spanish. First, State rulings prohibited the course being taught entirely in Spanish, and it was necessary to use an English text along with the Spanish one. Secondly, there was a lack of appropriate classroom materials printed in Spanish. Thirdly, with limited vocabularies, the students had difficulty in expressing complex concepts. As the year progressed, however, there was more Spanish dialog.

Grade 11--Writing skills were emphasized in the Spanish Level IV class. The humanities class dealt with elements of philosophy found in the great books, literature, and painting. Both classes were always conducted in Spanish.

Grade 12--Two advanced placement courses were offered in Spanish: one on Iberic literature, the other on Latin American literature. A third course on Ibero-American civilization was taught completely in Spanish by a native teacher. All three 12th-grade courses were added to the curriculum for the Total Immersion students.

The Staff

Staffing the Total Immersion Program was more difficult than filling other foreign language positions because of the requirement that certain courses outside the language sequence be taught in the foreign tongue. Fortunately, personnel with the necessary qualifications were available for most of the courses planned for inclusion in the experiment.[5]

Five teachers participated in the project. One taught all 3 years, giving Spanish III, Spanish IV, and the Advanced Placement course in Latin American literature. In addition to their professional competencies, the Total Immersion teachers had goodly amounts of patience, enthusiasm, and understanding. These latter qualities were especially important in the early months of the project which were quite difficult for the students. They found the Total Immersion experience with all its concomitant demands very trying at first and needed teachers with insight who could help them through their many frustrations.

Evaluation Instruments and Comparison Groups

The progress of the Total Immersion students was carefully followed through 10th, 11th, and 12th grades, and their performance in Spanish and certain other subjects was compared with that of local and national groups as described below. The evaluation instruments varied from year to year and included teacher-made tests, standardized tests, and New York State Regents examinations as shown in table 2.

Grade 10--Testing was most extensive in the first year of the project when there was a local control group made up of 17 students

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[5]No teacher was available to teach the American History course in Spanish as had been hoped. It has been included in the alternative curriculum in appendix B.

TABLE 2

Total Immersion Evaluation

Test	Administration	Comparison Group
Grade 10		
A-LM Spanish Level Three Unit Tests; Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962.	Oct., Nov., Dec. Jan., Feb., Mar.	Control
Spanish Test Prepared by the Commack Foreign Language Department Staff.	Dec., Apr.	Control
New York State Regents Examination - Spanish 3.	June	Control
World History Tests Prepared by the Commack Staff.	Dec., Apr.	Control
New York State Regents Examination - World History.	June	Control
Grade 11		
MLA Cooperative Spanish Language Tests - Form MA	June	Fourth-Year Spanish High School Students -- National Second-Year Spanish College Students -- National Local Level IV Spanish Class
Grade 12		
CEEB Spanish Listening Comprehension	Feb.	All Students Taking Test -- Nationwide
CEEB Spanish Achievement Test	May	All Students Taking Test -- Nationwide
CEEB Advanced Placement Test in Spanish	May	----
MLA Cooperative Spanish Language Test - Form MB	June	Scores of the Same Group of Students 1 Year Earlier

matched with the Total Immersion (TI) students on the basis of sex, IQ, and scores on the Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED) and the Verbal Reasoning section of the Differential Aptitude Test (DAT). As shown in table 3, mean IQ's as measured by the Lorge-Thorndike Intelligence Test, given in grade 10, were virtually the same: Total Immersion group--123.4, control group--123.3. On the ITED and the DAT and on their mean final grade in social studies at the end of grade 9, the Total Immersion group exceeded the control group by less than 2 points. The difference in Spanish II final grades was more pronounced: 6.9 points ($p < .01$) with means of 86.1 for the TI group and 79.2 for the control group. All but four of the control group students had the same teacher for Spanish III as did the Total Immersion group. However, the Total Immersion students had their own Spanish class.

TABLE 3

Mean Standardized Test Scores and Final Grades of Grade 10 Total Immersion and Control Groups

Group	Test Scores						Final Grades[d]			
	IQ[a]		ITED[b]		DAT Verbal[c]		Social Studies		Spanish II	
	N	Gr. 10	N	Gr. 9	N	Gr. 10	N	Gr. 9	N	Gr. 9
Total Immersion	17	123.4	17	81.6	14	78.0	17	86.9	17	86.1
Control	17	123.3	17	79.9	17	77.2	17	85.1	17	79.2
Difference		.1		1.7		.8		1.8		6.9*

[a]Lorge-Thorndike IQ

[b]Lowa Tests of Educational Development

[c]Differential Aptitude Test, Verbal Reasoning

[d]Report cards, June 1966

*$p < .01$

The two groups were tested at monthly intervals from October through April. In October, November, January, February, and March, they were given unit tests from the teacher edition of the text on audio-lingual materials, A-LM Spanish Level Three, published by Harcourt, Brace, and World (1962). In December and April, they took tests prepared by the staff of the foreign language department at the high school. In June, they took the New York State Spanish 3 Regents Examination. These various tests yielded total scores and thus did not assess particular aspects of the foreign language instruction such as listening comprehension, reading, and writing. Moreover, they did not measure speaking skills such as fluency, intonation, and accent that can be evaluated by subjective judgment only.

In addition to the Spanish tests, the Total Immersion and control groups were given world history tests prepared by the school staff in December and April and the June Regents Examination in World History.

Grade 11--No suitable control group was available in the second year of the program. Therefore, the project testing was limited to the administration of the Modern Language Association Cooperative Language Test in Spanish, Form MA, for which national norms were available. The level M test is designed for the third and fourth year of language learning in the secondary school or the third and fourth semester of language learning in college. Comparisons were made with the norms for fourth-year high school students and second-year college students. Three sections of the MLA test (writing, listening, and reading) were given to 12 Spanish Level IV students who were not in the Total Immersion program and whose ability and backgrounds were not comparable. They served as a local comparison group for all but the speaking section of the MLA test.

Grade 12--In grade 12, the Total Immersion group took four tests with national norms. In February, they were given the College Entrance Examination Board Spanish Listening Comprehension Test. In May, they took the CEEB Spanish Achievement Test and the CEEB Advanced Placement Test in Spanish. In June, they took Form MB of the MLA Cooperative Language Test in Spanish so that assessment of progress since the end of the previous year was possible.

RESULTS

Grade 10

Mean scores and mean score differences of the Total Immersion and control groups on the Spanish tests given in grade 10 are shown in table 4. As previously indicated, at the end of grade 9, the differential between the two groups on final grades in Spanish was 6.9 points. On the first A-LM unit test in October, after 2 months of the new program, the mean score of the Total Immersion group was 11.2 points higher than that of the control group (80.4 - 69.2). The mean scores of both groups declined on the second unit test, but the differential between them increased to 14.2 points in favor of the TI students. On the third test, prepared by the school staff, the gap narrowed to 8.6 points. In the second half of the year, the score differences favoring the TI group became more pronounced. The TI superiority jumped from 13.8 points on the January A-LM unit test to 24.4 points on the February unit test; it was 23.9 points on the April staff test. On the Spanish 3 Regents Examination, there was a 19.1 point difference in favor of the TI students. The score differences of the groups over the year are presented graphically in figure 1.

TABLE 4

Mean Scores of Total Immersion and Control Groups on Spanish A-LM[a] Tests, Departmental Tests, and Spanish Level 3 Regents Examination
Grade 10, 1966-67

Group	Oct: A-LM Unit XVI		Nov: A-LM Unit XVII		Dec: Dept. Test		Dec: A-LM Unit XVIII	
	N	$\bar{X}$	N	$\bar{X}$	N	$\bar{X}$	N	$\bar{X}$
Total Immersion	16	80.4	17	75.7	17	82.7	16	80.6
Control	15	69.2	15	61.5	14	74.1	15	68.7
Difference		11.2		14.2		8.6		11.9

Group	Jan: A-LM Unit XIX		Feb: A-LM Unit XX		Apr: Dept. Test		June Regents Exam		
	N	$\bar{X}$	N	$\bar{X}$	N	$\bar{X}$	N	$\bar{X}$	Adjusted Mean[d]
Total Immersion	15	81.6	16	85.8	17	79.0	17	89.5[b]	88.5
Control	15	67.8	16	61.4	17	55.1	16	70.4[c]	71.5
Difference		13.8		24.4		23.9		19.1	17.0*

[a]Unit tests from teacher's manual - A-LM Spanish Level Three, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1962).

[b]S.D. = 6.26

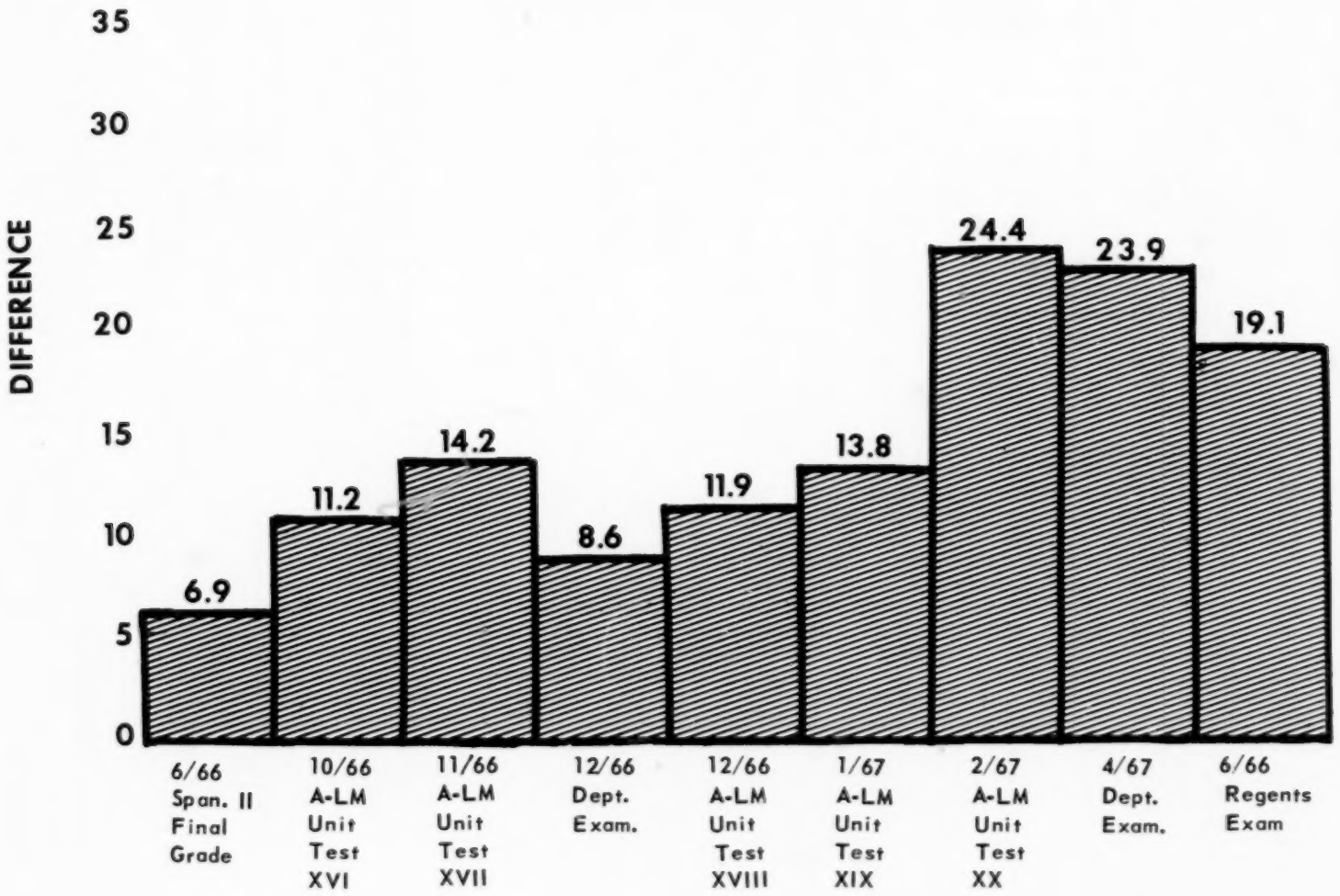
[c]S.D. = 11.22

[d]Spanish II final grade used as covariate in covariance analysis.

*$p < .01$ (F test)

FIGURE I

Mean Score Differences on Spanish Tests 1966- 67
Total Immersion Group over Control Group



Because of the significant difference between the Total Immersion and control groups on their Spanish II final grades, covariance analysis was used to test the significance of the difference between their mean scores on the Spanish 3 Regents Examination. As shown in table 4, the difference in the adjusted means, using Spanish II grades as the covariate, was significant at the .01 level (score differences on unit and staff tests were not tested for significance).

The results of the Total Immersion and control groups on the three tests in world history are presented in table 5. It was anticipated that the teaching of this "nonlanguage" subject in Spanish might adversely affect the achievement of the Total Immersion students. However, this negative effect did not materialize. The mean score of the TI group on the first department staff test was 3 points higher than that of the controls (87.5 - 84.5). On the Regents examination in June, the differential was 6.7 points in favor of the TI students.

TABLE 5

Mean Scores of Total Immersion and Control Groups on Departmental Tests and Regents Examination in World History Grade 10, 1966-67

Group	Dec. Dept. Test		Apr. Dept. Test		June Regents Exam	
	N	$\bar{X}$	N	$\bar{X}$	N	$\bar{X}$
Total Immersion	17	87.5	15	86.7	17	81.8
Control	17	84.5	16	85.8	17	75.1
Difference		3.0		0.9		6.7

Grade 11

Comparisons of the Total Immersion group with national norm groups and with local fourth-year Spanish students outside the TI program at the end of grade 11 on the MLA Cooperative Spanish Language Test are given in tables 6 and 7. One-tailed *t* tests for independent samples were used to determine the significance of differences between the means of the Total Immersion students and those of national and local comparison groups. Two-tailed *t* tests were used for the local comparison group vs. the national groups.

As shown in table 6, the mean score of the TI group was higher than the mean for the national norm group of high school students in fourth-year Spanish on all four subtests: speaking, writing, listening, and reading. The TI group's mean score of 207.7 in speaking was higher than the score of 99.9 percent of the national group. The difference of nearly 30 points between the TI and national means on speaking was significant at the .005 point, as were the less dramatic differences in favor of the TI group on writing and listening. The 4.7 point difference favoring the TI group on reading was significant at the .05 point. The TI group means were also significantly higher than those of the local comparison group on all three subtests which the latter took, i.e., writing, listening, and reading. The local comparison group had lower means than did the national high school norm group on listening and reading; their mean on writing was higher than that of the national group.

The overall performance of the TI group appeared even better when compared with that of students in second-year college Spanish as comparison of tables 6 and 7 will show. The midpercentile rank of the TI group mean went from 99.9^{+} to 98 on speaking, stayed at 92 for writing, and went from

TABLE 6

MLA Cooperative Spanish Language Test[a] Scores of Grade 11
Total Immersion and Control Groups and National Fourth-Year High School Norm Group

Group	Speaking				Writing				Listening				Reading			
	N	$\bar{X}$	MPR[b]	SD	N	$\bar{X}$	MPR[b]	SD	N	$\bar{X}$	MPR[b]	SD	N	$\bar{X}$	MPR[b]	SD
Total Immersion (TI)	12	207.7	99.9+	8.9	15	174.5	92	7.0	14	182	76	5.7	15	178.7	66	9.6
Local Comparison (LC)	[c]	—	—	—	11	166.9	58	7.6	9	170.6	45	10.3	10	169.8	49	6.1
National High School Norm (NHS)	79	178	56	10	168	165	51	9	386	173	49	12	288	174	59	15
Mean Score Differences																
TI - NHS	29.7****				9.5****				9.0****				4.7*			
TI - LC	—				7.6***				11.4****				8.9****			
LC - NHS	—				1.9				-2.4				-4.2**			

[a] Form MA

[b] Midpercentile Rank

[c] Subtest not given

*$p < .05$ (one tailed test)

**$p < .05$ (two tailed test)

***$p < .01$ (one tailed test)

****$p < .005$ (one tailed test)

TABLE 7

MLA Cooperative Spanish Language Test[a] Scores of Grade 11
Total Immersion and Control Groups and National Second-Year College Norm Group

Group	Speaking				Writing				Listening				Reading			
	N	$\bar{X}$	MPR[b]	SD	N	$\bar{X}$	MPR[b]	SD	N	$\bar{X}$	MPR[b]	SD	N	$\bar{X}$	MPR[b]	SD
Total Immersion (TI)	12	207.7	98	8.9	15	174.5	92	7.0	14	182	89	5.7	15	178.7	80	9.6
Local Comparison (LC)	—[c]	—	—	—	11	166.9	70	7.6	9	170.6	75	10.3	10	169.8	67	6.1
National College Norm (NC)	172	176	49	19	144	162	53	10	416	164	60	15	430	168	61	14
Mean Score Differences																
TI - NC		31.7**				12.5**				18.0**				10.7**		
LC - NC		—				4.9*				6.6				1.8		

[a] Form MA

[b] Midpercentile rank

[c] Subtest not given

*$p < .05$ (two tailed test)

**$p < .005$ (one tailed test)

76 to 89 on listening and from 66 to 80 on reading. The local comparison group also appeared better in relation to the college group. Its mean scores on the three subtests taken were all above the national means, and the midpercentile ranks of its means jumped as much as 30 percentile points.

Grade 12

Results on the College Entrance Examination Board Spanish Tests in Listening Comprehension and Achievement given in 12th grade are shown in table 8. On both tests, the mean scores of the Total Immersion group were higher than 90 percent of the students who took the test throughout the country. Moreover, on both tests the lowest individual scores in the Total Immersion group were above the national means.

TABLE 8

College Entrance Examination Board Spanish Test Scores
of Grade 12 Total Immersion Group
Compared with National Means for Fourth-Year Students

Group	Listening Comprehension Test February 1969	Achievement Test May 1969
Total Immersion		
Mean (N = 11)	713.4	728.5
Lowest Score	595	630
National Mean	578[a]	563[b]

[a] College Entrance Examination Board, College Board Score Reports, 1969-1970. (New York: CEEB, 1969), p. 37.

[b] Ibid., p. 34.

Table 9 compares the grade 11 and grade 12 mean scores on the MLA Cooperative Spanish Language Test of the TI students who remained in the program all 3 years. The TI group means were higher on all four subtests at the end of grade 12. The midpercentile ranks of the TI mean scores (based on the fourth-year high school norms) were higher for the writing, listening, and reading subtests. (The midpercentile rank on speaking had already been above the 99th percentile at the end of grade 11.)

TABLE 9

MLA Cooperative Spanish Language Test Scores
of Grade 12 Total Immersion Group
at End of Grade 11 and Grade 12

Test Administration	Speaking			Writing			Listening			Reading		
	N	$\bar{X}$	MPR[a]	N	$\bar{X}$	MPR	N	$\bar{X}$	MPR	N	$\bar{X}$	MPR
Grade 11[b] June 1968	10[c]	209	99.9+	12[c]	174.9	92	11[c]	182.5	76	12[c]	179.8	70
Grade 12[d] June 1969	10	213	99.9+	12	178.2	99.4	11	187.7	99	12	191.7	93

[a]Midpercentile rank in national fourth-year high school norm group

[b]Form MA

[c]TI students not continuing program in grade 12 omitted.

[d]Form MB

The lowest scores of the grade 12 Total Immersion students on the MLA test were above the mean scores of the norm group in both grade 12 and grade 11. Lowest score data for the two administrations of the test are given in table 10.

TABLE 10

Lowest Scores of Grade 12 Total Immersion Students on MLA Cooperative Spanish Language Test at End of Grades 11 and 12 Compared with Means of National Fourth-Year High School Norm Group

Item	Speaking		Writing		Listening		Reading	
	Score	MPR	Score	MPR	Score	MPR	Score	MPR
Lowest Score Grade 11	193	94	152	10	176	61	162	30
Lowest Score Grade 12	194	99	172	79	184	85	184	81
National Mean	178	56	165	51	173	49	174	59

On the other College Board examination, the Advanced Placement Test in Spanish, which is scored by the CEEB, one of the Total Immersion students received a rating of 5, the highest obtainable. Three students had a rating of 4, and six a rating of 3. In college, some students received as many as 18 quarter-hour credits or 12 semester-hour credits for their advanced placement work.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Taken together, the test results for the 3 years show that the students in the Total Immersion Language Program were more proficient in Spanish than were other students in the same school and in the Nation generally. Their average scores were consistently above those of comparison groups on all aspects of language learning--speaking, writing, listening, and reading.

In considering these results, a number of limitations in the research must be recognized. Even at the 10th grade level, the comparison between the Total Immersion pupils and the "matched" group in Spanish Level III is tenuous because the groups are not, in fact, comparable. Because participation in the program was voluntary and all eligible students who chose to enroll did so, there was an initial distinction between the experimentals and controls in terms of motivation, interest, and willingness to submit oneself to a different and probably more demanding experience. Adherence to a strict experimental design would have required random assignment of volunteering students to the experimental and control groups as well as the inclusion of nonvolunteers in the program.

The differing interests of the volunteering Total Immersion students may account for the difference between them and the controls on Spanish II marks at the end of grade 9. That achievement difference was significant in spite of the comparability of the two groups on IQ, verbal aptitude, and general achievement. Efforts were made to control this difference through the use of covariance analysis in comparing scores on the Spanish Regents Examination at the end of Grade 10. Even with the initial difference in Spanish achievement eliminated, the TI students were significantly higher than the controls on the Regents test.

The motivational factors which distinguished the Total Immersion students from their controls in grade 10 would probably differentiate them from the local and national comparison groups used in grades 11 and 12. It is interesting to note that the local control group in grade 11, a group described as quite different from the TI group in both ability and previous language performance, had mean scores above those of the second-year college students on all three subtests taken, while they were above the fourth-year high school mean on only one. These results underscore the necessity for clearly defining comparison groups when conducting evaluations of new programs.

In spite of the technical limitations cited, the fact remains that the test results of the Total Immersion students were superior. The conclusion that can be drawn from the test data is that interested students who participate in a special program with extra course work and other opportunities for reading and speaking a foreign language will perform well on standardized tests and Regents examinations in that language.

The test performance of the TI students suggests that the Total Immersion program had been successful in developing their ability to use the language, that they had become, to some degree, bilingual. This accomplishment was confirmed by the students' classroom performance as reported by a number of observers.

Walter J. Boeri, principal of Commack High School North, commented that it was amazing how these Total Immersion students could give reports, ask and answer questions, lead a discussion or an animated conversation, and make joking remarks, all in Spanish.

Javier Pla, a resource teacher from Columbia, South America, elaborated on their accomplishments in a written report:

> It is agreeably surprising to a native of the Spanish language to observe how these youngsters handle the foreign language in such a way that it enables them to reason, learn and express themselves. They do not suffer from the traditional defects, i.e., long pauses when speaking, monosyllabic answers or standard "tape" answers, which are common to the current system of language learning. The use of the target language is as natural to them as the use of English. They also know about the related civilizations of Iberic origin. The "classics" are as familiar to them ... as to a student on the same level in an Hispanic country. They read novels, poems, short stories and essays directly in the target language avoiding translations and their related problems.[6]

Finally, a staff member wrote:

> I have been very fortunate to participate in the Total Immersion Program for three years. As the teacher of the humanities classes, I received from the students what I believe to be the ultimate reward for any language teacher -- mastery of the tongue. In the students' senior year, I was able to discuss in class, in the foreign language, any topic that I or they chose.

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[6]Barbara A. Ort and Dwight R. Smith, "The Language Teacher Tours the Curriculum," Foreign Language Annals, Vol. 3, (October, 1969), p. 56.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of its demonstrated feasibility and success in Commack, the Total Immersion Language Program may well serve as a model for other school districts. This has been suggested by foreign language specialists in the State Education Department who, in 1968, wrote: "The Total Immersion Language Program is very effective ... It is worthy of great praise and deserves emulation in some schools throughout the State."[7]

The stipulation of some schools suggests that certain qualifications must be taken into account. Specifically, it must be recognized that the program entails additional expenditures and that the number of students with a primary interest in acquiring proficiency in a foreign language is limited. Because of these considerations, it might be well for neighboring school districts to cooperate in the operation of a Total Immersion Language Program. A Total Immersion Language Center, established under the auspices of a Board of Cooperative Educational Services and patterned after the Commack program, could serve many school districts. Interested students could spend half the school day at the Language Center and the other half in their regular high schools working on the subjects not included in the language program. The Suffolk County BOCES for the Third Supervisory District has indicated its willingness to support such a Center if enough districts are interested and are in a financial position to contribute to it. Budget problems in individual districts in Suffolk County have so far precluded this undertaking.

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[7] Cooperative Review Service, The Instructional Program in Commack Public Schools, (Albany, New York: State Education Department, September 16, 1968), p. 88.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Total Immersion Language Program has shown itself to be an effective approach to teaching a foreign language. Students in Commack High School North who chose to undertake the TI program learned to speak and understand a foreign language and did so to a substantially greater degree than did students in traditional language programs.

However, it must be recognized that the Total Immersion experiment at Commack does not provide a universal test of the procedure's effectiveness or potential. The program needs to be tried elsewhere. It should also be noted that the students participating in the Commack program were in the bright-normal to superior IQ range typically found in students in level III and level IV language programs. What potential Total Immersion has for the average student in a level I or level II class is not known. Additionally, it must be recognized that the program's demands on students' time and effort are very great indeed. It takes considerable motivation to pursue a program of this sort, and the number of students inclined to choose it may be relatively small.

Nevertheless, Commack's successful experience with its program should provide impetus for further experimentation with Total Immersion. Cooperative sponsorship of a Total Immersion Language Center by a number of school districts appears to be a reasonable and promising direction for this experimentation.

APPENDIX A

Textbooks and Materials
Used in the Total Immersion Program in Spanish

Spanish Level III

A-LM Spanish Level Two. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1962.

A-LM Spanish Level Three. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1962.

Bague, E. Práctica y ejercicios. Barcelona: Teide, 1966.

Spanish Level IV

A-LM Spanish Level Four. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1962.

Burdick, Marina García, and Robert D. O'Neal. Caleidoscopio español. Boston: Ginn, 1967.

Cervantes, Miguel de. Don Quijote de La Mancha. New York: Las Américas, 1958.

Del Río, Amelia and Ángel. Del solar hispánico. New York: Holt, 1963.

García López, J. Historia de la literatura. Barcelona: Teide, 1964.

Advanced Placement Spanish

Alpern, H. and DeGuzmán. Cuatro novelas modernas de la América hispánica. Philadelphia: Chilton, 1965.

Azorín. Doña Ines. Buenos Aires: Losada, 1965.

Baroja, Pío. El árbol de la ciencia. New York: Las Américas, 1966.

Calderón De La Barca, Pedro. La vida es sueño. Buenos Aires: Sapena, 1963.

Cela Camilo, José. La familia de Pascual Duarte. New York: Las Américas, 1965.

García Lorca, Federico. Antología poética. Buenos Aires: Losada, 1967.

García Lorca, Federico. Bodas de sangre. Buenos Aires: Losada, 1967.

García Lorca, Federico. La casa de Bernarda Alba. Buenos Aires: Losada, 1965.

García Lorca, Federico. Yerma. Buenos Aires: Losada, 1966.

Pérez Galdos, Benito. Misericordia. New York: Holt, 1966.

Unamuno, Miguel de. Niebla. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1966.

Unamuno, Miguel de. San Manuel Bueno Martir. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1964.

Humanities

Bague, Enrique and Jaime Vincens-Vives. Ars-historia del arte y de la cultura. Barcelona: Teide, 1961.

Daudet, Alphonse. Tartarín de Tarascona, Adaptación por A. Valverde. Madrid: Aguilar, 1961.

Espina García, Antonio. Exploradores de África. Madrid: Aguilar, 1958.

Espina García, Antonio. Julio César. Madrid: Aguilar, 1968.

Homero. La iliada, Adaptación por Martín Alonzo. Madrid: Aguilar, 1965.

Homero. La odisea, Adaptación por A.J.M. Madrid: Aguilar, 1962.

Tormos, Pilar G. La historia de la nave. (Instituto De Agostini, Novara.) Barcelona: Teide, 1964.

Tormos, Pilar G. La vida del hombre primitivo. (Instituto De Agostini, Novara.) Barcelona: Teide, 1964.

Tormos, Pilar G. Los viajes de Marco Polo. (Instituto De Agostini, Novara.) Barcelona: Teide, 1963.

Ventura, David R. La Leyenda de Sígfrido. (Instituto De Agostini, Novara.) Barcelona: Teide, 1964.

Virgilio. La eneida, Adaptación por A. Espina García. Madrid: Aguilar, 1961.

World History

Colorado, Antonio, Jean Muriel Drummond, and Nathaniel Platt. Nuestro Mundo. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1959.

Pla, Antonio. Los países del mundo. Barcelona: Teide, 1966.

Vincens-Vives, Jaime. Atlas de historia universal. Barcelona: Teide, 1955.

Ibero-American Civilization

LoPrete, Carlos A. and Dorothy McMahon. Ibero-América-síntesis de su civilización. New York: Scribner, 1965.

Mallo, Jerónimo. Síntesis de su civilización. New York: Scribner, 1957.

General References

Amador, Emilio Martínez. Shorter Spanish Dictionary. Boston: D. C. Heath. Barcelona: Sapena, 1953.

Diccionario de sinónimos. Barcelona: Teide, 1966.

Encyclopedia barsa, 16 Vols. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1965.

Larousse universal, 3 Vols. Paris: Larousse, 1958.

Vincens-Vives, Jaime. Historia de España y América, 5 Vols. Barcelona: Vincens-Vives, 1961.

Visintín, Luigi. Atlas universal. Versión Castellana, rev. por Umberto Bonepace. Barcelona: Teide, 1964. (Maps by Instituto Geográfico DeAgostini, Novara.)

Other

Scrabble, Spanish Edition. New York: Parker Bros.

APPENDIX B

An Alternative Curriculum

While it was felt that the course sequence presented in this report was most desirable, the foreign language teachers who took part in the Total Immersion experiment believed that a curriculum embodying two classes per day in the foreign language over a 3-year period would have been sufficient to achieve the goals of the program. Table 11 outlines an alternate sequence of courses that might be used to implement the Total Immersion concept without increasing costs or creating the need for extensive student program changes. Other courses could be substituted for those listed in table 11 if they were deemed more practical. A description of a variety of courses which have been taught in a foreign language can be found in the October 1969 issue of the Foreign Language Annals.[8]

TABLE 11

Alternative Course Sequences for a Total Immersion Language Program

Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Language, Level III	Language, Level IV	Humanities
World History	American History	Civilization
	Advanced Placement I (optional)	Advanced Placement II (optional)

[8] Ort and Smith, op. cit., pp. 28-74.